

ELIZABETH GARRETT

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS.

Leo A. McClatchy

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LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

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By Leo A. McClatchy,  
Special Assistant.

Avenues of enjoyment and self-improvement which many sightless people think are permanently closed to them, are being explored, with fascinating results, by Miss Elizabeth Garrett, of Roswell, New Mexico. She is a daughter of the late Southwestern peace officer, Sheriff Pat Garrett, who terminated the career of the lawless Billy The Kid.

Blind since infancy, Miss Garrett has utilized her handicap as a ladder to accomplishment. "All handicaps," she says, "must, as much as possible, be made into stepping stones." She is an active member of her community's Business and Professional Women's Club; she sings, plays the piano, and composes music. As a teacher of voice, she is self-supporting. She does her own housekeeping and her own cooking in the studio home she shares with a canary, a cat, and her Seeing-Eye Dog, Teene. She has poise and graciousness, with an extremely attractive personality that puts you immediately at ease. Friends know her as a charming conversationalist. She is well informed on the world of today and yesterday. There is a nimbleness to her mental alertness, stimulated by an active, knowledge-seeking inquisitiveness. This she nourishes through Braille reading, by conversation, and the radio. She plays Bridge, with cards that have raised numerals and designs.

"Indeed," as one of her many friends remarked, "she seems to get much more out of life than do some of the rest of us."

Miss Garrett is an enthusiastic "sightseer" - gets a mental and spiritual uplift in "doing" such places as the Carlsbad Caverns National Park. She has visited that underground Land of Fantasy on four occasions, twice in company of Tecno, and always on the regularly scheduled walking trips with hundreds of other visitors. She plans to be there again this year on Governor's Day, probably in mid-May, to lead the thousands of school children in singing the official state song which she composed: "Oh, Fair New Mexico."

Modest to the point of shunning even mild publicity, Miss Garrett, who uses an ordinary portable typewriter for most of her correspondence and other writing - a Braille machine when the occasion requires - declined an invitation to write her impressions of the caverns. She feared that some people might feel she was endeavoring to publicize herself. She consented to an interview, when it was pointed out that other sightless persons might thus learn of the possibilities of stimulating and developing within themselves an added appreciation of Nature.

She was returning from a shopping expedition, carrying groceries





### ROCK BISCUITS

By Dr. Chas. N. Gould,  
Former Regional Geologist.

Rock biscuits, done to a golden brown, some of them 20 feet high and 30 feet in diameter, are "served" to visitors as one of the unique attractions in Petit Jean State Park, Arkansas, about 50 miles northwest of Little Rock. Nothing quite like them has been found elsewhere. Thousands of people see them each year, and wonder how they were formed. What was Mother Nature's recipe for making this pan of biscuits, and how did she manage to get that brown tint on them? Rather complicated geological processes were involved in forming and "baking" these dome-shaped masses of sandstone.

Most of the hard rocks exposed on the earth's surface contain cracks or crevices. Geologists call them joints. Usually joints are arranged in a definite pattern. In the case of these rock biscuits there are two systems of joints crossing nearly at right angles, forming squares. The joints were probably formed by shrinking of the earth's crust. Then water sinking along the joints dissolved portions of the rock, allowing other portions to crumble away, and finally oval-shaped surfaces like the tops of biscuits were formed.

Mother Nature did not use a giant biscuit-cutter to shape the rock biscuits. Neither did she bake them in a fiery furnace. Instead, the cool water that trickled over the sand grains contained iron in solution; part of the iron was deposited as cementing material in the sandstone, and when exposed to the atmosphere, the iron oxidized to give the varying brown tints. With slightly different physical conditions the sandstone probably would have weathered out into stone pillars, pinnacles, towers, balanced rocks, and other erosion forms, such as in Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah; and Chiricahua National Monument, Arizona.





MISS GARRETT AND TEENE



for a luncheon to which she had invited a friend, when I met her on the sidewalk fronting her home, La Casita Studio. From others I had learned that once she heard a human voice, she would immediately recognize it thereafter, though years might pass between meetings. She had never heard my voice but she had been expecting me, so when I greeted her with a "Good morning, Miss Garrett," it was not necessary that I further identify myself. She shifted the packages under her arm, changed to her left hand the guide rein she was holding on Teene, and greeted me with a hand-clasp and a smiling assurance that she was happy I had come to visit with her. Teene, a sleek, black, 5-year-old female Original German Shepherd, graduate of the Seeing-Eye School in Morristown, New Jersey, regarded me with suspicion, but became immediately friendly, after carrying out her Mistress' instruction to "sit and shake hands" with me.

Teene piloted us along the narrow walkway through the lawn, leading to the studio that sets back between adjoining homes. Miss Garrett reached into the mail-box on the wall beside the front door. Then, in apparent after-thought: "I must see if there are any messages," she reached up to a little artificial gourd suspended from the porch ceiling. "If not at home, leave note," was printed on the gourd, whose tiny door opened into a panel that housed a small notebook and pencil. A feel of the pages told her that no messages had been written.

She unlocked the front door, and we entered a small living-room. The furniture arrangements indicated excellent taste. The hardwood floor was freshly polished. I looked for, but didn't see, any dust; not a speck. "She's a meticulous housekeeper," I thought, as she indicated an overstuffed chair, and invited me to be seated.

Teene was unharnessed, as her guide-services are not required in the home. She glanced disdainfully at the large cat brushing against my leg, and there seemed to be something of a sneer in her sniff.

"They are not good friends," Miss Garrett said.

My hostess chose a small rocking chair beside the grand piano. She called to the Roller canary in a small cage in the adjoining sun-room to whistle for us. The bird responded immediately.

"You were interested in knowing about my reactions to visits I have made in the Carlsbad Caverns," Miss Garrett commenced. "Of course, the experience of having been in such a wonderful place is one that no person could ever forget. I was a bit hesitant at first, about going. The Business and Professional Women's Club invited me to go along on their trip as an honored guest. I talked with others who had been in the caverns, seeking to get some description of the place. But each merely replied something to the effect that 'Oh, it is too wonderful; I can't describe it.' I thought that if they couldn't express themselves about it, the trip would be a perfect bore to me. But it wasn't. Superintendent Boles at once ingratiated himself by being my first es-



cort, as I didn't have Teene then.

"On entering the caverns, you sense that the ceiling suddenly leaves you, and you realize that you are not in a little hole in the ground but in a mammoth subterranean place surrounded by the most natural phenomena. I was privileged to touch the wonderful lacework of the stalactites and stalagmites. None of it is wrought the same. It is all patterned and different. The stalactites, when touched, have really musical tones. Colonel Boles showed me the lily pads, and he showed me also every conceivable interesting object in bass relief, so it was just as interesting to me as to those who were looking at it.

"The vastness of the cave is seen and felt when we got into the Big Room, with its great area and its hospitable odor of good coffee. Any description of the caverns, of course, is inadequate. But it is always a wonderful experience. I look forward to it. I love it. The ceremony at the Rock of Ages is not to be described but to be experienced. The courtesy always shown by the Superintendent and the Rangers is splendid. That's what makes the trip a perfectly glorious adventure to anyone.

"There is no question in my mind that regardless of any difficulty an individual may have in life, it is a privilege to take that trip. No one could possibly come out without knowing he had been in the presence of the Creator of all things. I think that if people who go to the caverns do not have, or use, the most wonderful gift that we have - imagination - such a trip will give it to them, or stimulate them to use what they already have. Instead of being a bore, my first trip turned out to be the most pleasant and inspiring experience of my lifetime. I do surely suggest with all the enthusiasm that I possess that other people avail themselves of the good fortune I have had."

Miss Garrett's "sightseeing" has not been confined to the Carlsbad Caverns. She has traveled rather extensively through the Southwest, and in other sections of the country. Her own city, of course, she knows intimately, as she spends much of her time walking, and in visiting with friends. She has entertained the Business and Professional Women's Club at barbecues in her back yard.

"I don't believe in sitting down and folding hands," she explains. "If people really want to do things - I don't mean just half way - they can do them, so I don't take any credit for what I am doing. Some of the people who have come to visit with me have expected to see a secretary and a maid, but those people have been quickly disillusioned. It is my pleasure to do for myself. I maintain that everyone who makes the effort receives the highest inspiration from loved ones and friends."

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### THREATENING ROCK

Before and after it fell. Circular areas in the ruins of Pueblo Bonito are kivas, or ceremonial chambers.





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McClatchy, Leo A.

Light in the darkness.

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